



Wildwood IB World Magnet School

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wildwoodworldIB.org



Melissa Resh, Principal | Matt Fasana, Assistant Principal
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April 29, 2025

Dear Wildwood Community,

I am reaching out today regarding a situation that continues to impact our school community. Recently, there have been renewed social media posts making specific allegations against members of the Wildwood staff and administration, including me, and claims related to the treatment of a member of our school community.

No school district – including Chicago Public Schools – can or will publicly discuss individual student matters. Doing so would violate state and federal student privacy laws. While I cannot discuss individual student matters, I want to assure you that Wildwood leadership, together with Chicago Public Schools (CPS), takes every allegation of bullying, bias-based harm, and student safety with the utmost seriousness.

As principal, my top priority is – and always will be – the safety, well-being, and dignity of every Wildwood student. In all cases where concerns are raised, we follow the comprehensive protocols outlined by CPS, including immediate consultation with the Office of Student Protections and Title IX, the Office of Equity, and our Network leadership. We are committed to conducting thorough, fair, and timely reviews in every situation and immediately responding to ensure the safety of impacted students.

Chicago Public Schools defines bullying carefully and specifically, based on state law and best practices. According to CPS policy, bullying means any physical or verbal act or conduct – including communications made in writing or electronically – that is directed toward a student or students and meets all of the following criteria:

- An observed or perceived imbalance of power exists between the student(s) engaging in the bullying behavior and the targeted student(s).
- The behaviors are severe or pervasive (repeated over time), or there is a high likelihood that behaviors will be repeated. While bullying often involves repeated acts, a single severe incident can sometimes meet the criteria.
- The intent of the behavior is to cause physical or emotional harm to the targeted student(s).
- The behavior has or can reasonably be predicted to have one or more harmful effects, such as:
 - Placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to their person or property;
 - Causing substantial detriment to a student's physical or mental health;
 - Substantially interfering with a student's academic performance; or



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- Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from school services, activities, or privileges.

In situations where behaviors may involve bias-based harm — meaning conduct targeting a student based on a protected characteristic such as race, religion, gender identity, or disability status — CPS requires additional specific responses outlined in its [Bias-Based Harm Guidelines](#). These procedures are designed to ensure that all students feel safe, respected, and protected.

Our Approach to Reporting, Investigating, and Responding to Incidents at Wildwood

When any student reports an incident of harm, bullying, or perceived bullying, we immediately start the reporting and review process. The incident is entered into our Student Information System, Aspen, to ensure proper documentation and tracking by the appropriate offices in CPS. If the report includes any type of bias-based harm and/or sexual harassment, the Office of Student Protections and Title IX (OSP) determines next steps for the case, which include:

- If the Office of Student Protections determines the school should investigate, we do so promptly and address the outcome through the application of appropriate supports or consequences, aligned with the CPS Student Code of Conduct (linked [here](#)).
- If the Office of Student Protections determines that OSP will investigate, they take primary responsibility. The length of OSP-led investigations depends on the complexity of the case. At the conclusion of that investigation, OSP issues a determination letter that has next steps for the school in terms of disciplinary response and/or support.

In the case of bullying allegations, CPS policy requires that schools complete the investigation and make a determination within 10 school days.

Regardless of which office leads the investigation, when a student reports feeling unsafe due to bullying, bias-based harm, or sexual harassment, we immediately put proactive safety measures in place. This includes separating involved students, increasing adult supervision in shared spaces, developing individualized safety plans, and engaging in restorative supports where appropriate to prevent further harm. These actions are taken in collaboration with OSP, our Network 1 Chief of Schools and Social-Emotional Learning Specialist, the Student Safety Center, and with affected students' parents/caregivers.

Our Commitment to Social-Emotional Learning and Student Well-Being

At Wildwood, our efforts extend beyond responding to incidents. We prioritize proactive, schoolwide work to ensure a safe, inclusive, and supportive school culture, and that commitment is codified in



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our Continuous Improvement Work Plan. Over the past several years, we have expanded our social-emotional learning (SEL) supports, strengthened restorative practices, and built a behavioral health team to provide students with the resources they need to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically. These efforts include:

- **Restorative Approaches:** Using talking circles and conversations to repair harm, rebuild trust, and foster accountability.
- **Keep It Safe Campaign:** Student-led work around safety, kindness, and responsibility connected to our IB Learner Profile.
- **Monthly IB Assemblies:** School-wide celebrations reinforcing character development, belonging, and shared community values.
- **Second Step SEL Curriculum and Calm Classroom:** Classroom lessons and mindfulness practices that help students manage emotions, navigate peer relationships, and resolve conflicts constructively.
- **The Peace Room:** A dedicated space where students can reflect, reset, and seek confidential support from our Director of Social-Emotional Learning.
- **Behavioral Health Team Support:** Structured interventions for students needing additional help with emotional regulation, peer conflict, or mental health supports.

Our mission at Wildwood is to ensure that every child feels safe, seen, and supported — every day. This work is ongoing and deeply collaborative, involving our teachers, staff, families, and students together. I am proud of the way our community has consistently chosen partnership, reflection, and care as we navigate challenges and celebrate growth.

As always, I encourage you to reach out directly to me, Assistant Principal Fasana, or any trusted Wildwood staff member with questions, concerns, or feedback about your child's experience. Our commitment to transparency, responsiveness, and student-centered decision-making remains unwavering.

Thank you for continuing to entrust us with your children. We are honored to partner with you to create the safest, kindest, and most enriching environment possible.

Warmly,
Principal Resh